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THE

NATURAL EVIDENCE

ON

THE BEING OF GOD,

AND

THE IMMORTAL LIFE,

BY

Elihu
E. G. HOLLAND.

BATH, STEUBEN, CO., N. Y.
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TO THE PUBLIC.

The following thoughts are given, in compliance with the request of several friends, who think that they may meet the wants and relieve the difficulties of many minds. I hope that this opinion may not prove an error.

I have often used the words Nature and Universe, where I should have used the name of the Creator, but for the purpose of meeting the spirit of doubt upon its own grounds. Placing but little value upon the points which divide sects, and regarding them more as apparent than as real antagonists, I have deemed it more important to write upon principles which lie at the foundation of Morals and Religion, which unite, rather than divide mankind.

I would simply add, that it has been with much haste that the following has been written. The position of the writer being that of traveller, he had not the leisure to bestow upon it the patient care, which under other circumstances had been practicable.

E. G. HOLLAND.

Bath, Dec. 16, 1845.

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THE

NATURAL EVIDENCE

ON

THE BEING OF GOD,

AND

THE IMMORTAL LIFE.

PART I.

Since the world began, Religion, in some form, has been a part of the history of man. Every age has its worship, its shrines, its religious ideas. No idea has been more universal than the idea of the sacred; and it is most clearly inferable, from the developement of human nature in the past, as well as from a clear analysis of its elements, that the time will never come, in all the future history of Man, in which he will be divorced from Religion, from Worship. The subject therefore of Religion, by its strong connexion with the nature of man, is in itself great, grand, sublime. The philosopher, who would see Nature in her Unity, and Entireness, cannot neglect it. What human nature now is, in its fundamental elements, it ever has been and ever will be. Its condition, its intelligence, its character, varies constantly, through different epochs; but that which constitutes Man, is forever changeless and unchangeable. His developements, his progress only, present the aspects of mutation.

I would institute the inquiry, On what does Religion rest? What is its source and origin? I deem this question important, and this, for reasons, which I may not, at present, pause to name.

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Many who belong to the party of tradition, and to the school of absolute scepticism, who never come nearer to causation, than a few strong effects, would lead you to the Religious sects, to the creeds and to the Priest, as being the fountain of the Religious sense and tendency of worship in the community. They think that the fruit is well accounted for, when they point to the branches, and to the blossoms, without taking any notice of the seminal principle which reposed in the seed. Thus to them, the cataracts which divide the stream, are the distant springs, from whence its waters come. By walking the same path of investigation, they would account for the moral sense in man, by the existing laws and institutions of his country; and the rational power of the human mind, by some abstract arts of reason, by sects and systems of philosophy. They dwell not upon the questions, Whence came the laws, the institutions? Whence the sects of philosophy and of religion? Did they flow from man, or did man flow from these? And if from man, what powers, what elements do they presuppose and imply, as antecedent to themselves?—These lead us to the fountain, and admonish man to return to himself, to know himself.

Sects in Philosophy, can only be accounted for, on the principle, that there is a *rational* power, inherent in man, that it belongs to his mind and nature. From the rational intellect the endless sects and systems, in science and philosophy, have sprung. Nor can you account for the sects, and systems of religion, only from the idea that there is a religious element in human nature, and that these are its varied expressions. The inferior animals, produce not diverse systems in science and ethics, because theirs is not the intellectual and the moral nature. Man can only display himself; unless he has in his nature a religious element, worship is impossible; the realization of the sacred is as far beyond his capacity as the absolute creation of worlds. The greatness of human intellect, is attested by all that the world has in the form of thought, of science, and

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philosophy; the greatness of the moral nature is seen in all the great moral ideas; and the depth and power of the religious element are plainly manifest in the worship of ages, in the realization of the Divine—in the homage paid to the ideas which have formed the religion of a people.

Superstition itself, is one proof of a religious element; although the expression, the action of that element, is under the direction of darkened intellect, in which the imagination plays, without that light which makes known the wise, uniform methods and laws through which the Divinity operates. I have aimed in the foregoing remarks, to prove that there is in human nature, a religious element, which is part of itself, and the argument given is the very existence of worship, of religious sects and ideas. But the evidence is equally clear and overpowering, as taken from the capacity of man to *appreciate* a religion, given by the Creator, either through direct revelation, or the more silent, general, and distant medium of Nature. The mode of revelation, affects not the argument in the least.

Man can only realize religious ideas, the spirit of worship, through that which he has within himself. The child without being taught, pronounces the rose to be beautiful, because the external beauty of the object, so perfectly corresponds to that sense of beauty, and constitution of mind, which preceded the perception of the flower. But for this correspondence, this perception of beauty had been impossible. How could we without a rational power, seize upon the most perfect system of philosophy, though handed down from the skies? How could the Wisdom, the Righteousness, and the Goodness, unfolded in any revelation, be known and felt by us, farther than the principles of wisdom, rectitude and goodness exist in our own mind and consciousness? The animal will as soon look into Euclid, as man into a revealed religion, without kindred and corresponding powers within himself. The position taken becomes self-evident; and is capable of proof from a great variety of thought. If this position is now clear, it follows

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that religion is not, as a principle, grafted upon the world by the Priest, nor the church. The Priest did not create human nature. Whatever we are by nature, we are independent of the Priest, the Church, or ourselves.

There are two important ideas which spring out of the truth already gained. The first is, that to do justice to our whole nature, we should be religious. And the second is, that there is a God, a Supreme, Divine Being.

Our nature should be educated in all its powers and elements. The religious element is not in our being for no end. It is not there to be dormant: still less to be smothered and abused. And if, as many arguments do prove, this element is greatest, deepest and divinest of all, then religion is properly the chief of subjects and of universal concern. The true disciple of nature is not against nature. The man who has no concern in what appertains to religious ideas and life, follows not nature; nay, he blinds himself to its greatest reality.

But to be religious without a God is as impossible as to be intelligent without truth, or to see without light. The truth of a religious element implies a God. Why should there be this spirit of worship, in universal diffusion, unless there is a God, a Divine mind to meet it? Is this not a universe of correspondence? Do not *natural* wants find the objects which can sate them in the ample provision of the universe? Indeed nothing is more striking and beautiful in the great system of All Things, than the exact, the plain and often refined correspondence between the *real want* and the *existence* of the satisfying object.

To begin with what is outward, who fails to see the generous provision made for the great multitude of natural wants. Behold the eye and the light! The atmosphere and the lungs, the growth of vegetable life and the presence of solar light and heat, are corresponding things noticed by the mass of men; but such plain points, are but parts of an ncomprehensible system of correspondence.

The condition of man, which demands clothing for the

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body, is not uncared for. We notice visitations of thirst. And behold the fountains flowing at our feet! We hunger. And behold a fruitful earth! Behold the animal of the field, and wood, and waters, subject to human power and skill! We sleep. Behold the still silence and shadow of night! Health demands action. Behold a world of blessing, demanding labor as the essential condition! Man languishes. Behold the renovating properties diffused through a thousand forms.

But there is an inward man. He thirsts for knowledge. Behold a universe of truth, of reality! Boundless fields of science are spread out before him. Truth is a universal presence, and shines forth from the blue heavens, and gleams out of each point in nature, to meet a universal thirst. Man loves society. Behold nature, ever social, and ever speaking to man in his own language, ever wearing the hues of his own spirit! Behold *himself* in neighbor, country and world! His spirit moves in worship, the sacred element stirs itself in man. Behold the Supreme One, the Great Unseen! who is in all, and above all, who has sent out the dim shadow and likeness of Himself in all this visible nature, so vast, and so beautiful! Reader, can the correspondence fail? Is there the spirit, the element of worship, of religion in humanity, and is there no God? As well say, that there is an intellect but no truth, that there is a thirst, but no fountain.

I insist upon it, as an irresistible proof of the being of God, the existence of a religious element in our nature.— It has no business there, to speak plainly, if there is no being to be adored and worshipped. Such a thought, breaks up the correspondence of things; it breaks the greatest link of the entire chain. Such another deficiency as is here supposed, can never be found among the whole class of man's real wants. The ignorance of mankind in relation to the Supreme Being, is no evidence against the position taken, since the failure of man to know the Only true God, is no greater than his ill success in gaining a full knowledge

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of truth pertaining to natural things. Nature in her infinity of forms, manifests none other than *uniform* laws. Her laws, her variety, her constant order, speak to us of but one creating, preserving mind. We have educed two important ideas from the nature of man, which are, that all should be religious, and that there is a God. These ideas cannot be opposed, until the position is denied and disproven, that in humanity there is a religious element. *On this point*, is the great issue. And I would add, that no one who can reason with any force, need, upon this issue, to fear the conflict between truth and error.

The more common evidence in support of the great idea, on which all religion rests, is the argument from the outer temple, the wise, and benevolent arrangements, which control the operations of nature around us. This is doubtless a sound evidence—one that has addressed a greater number, than the one I have used. All men see a mighty force acting in the universe; acting in decay and in life, in motion and in rest; and all see somewhat of the wisdom which guides it; and the goodness of design to which these are subordinated has made upon all men some impression.—And it is not strange, that what men could *see* in outward objects, should become the greater evidence, in subduing doubt, upon this point.

I have no time to go further in this branch of investigation. The Bible attempts no logical proof of the Divine existence. It every where speaks as if this idea existed, as if it were undoubted. And I cannot but feel, that he who asks *proof* upon this truth, is in any other than his proper state. The man who says, *Prove* to me that there is such a principle as Virtue, or, *Prove* to me that there is such a principle as Vice, certainly gives some evidence of moral disorder. He who lives Virtue, seeks no *proof* that there is such a principle. He asks you not, to prove that the sun shines, nor that the stars give light. He who seeks proof that God *Is*, lives not like him whose life and consciousness are full of his presence. The only apology

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we have for giving an argument, is, that men do not live from their higher nature; they obey not the diviner instincts; they hear not the sacred voice of Nature and the Soul. Nature has the deep, solemn, silent, worshipful voice. The spirit of a calm, holy and eloquent worship oft seems to fill all this temple of God, this Nature around us. The soul in all climes has its sacred ideas, hopes and feelings; and as if Deep answered unto Deep, Nature and the Soul speak of Divinity; the one by an everlasting beauty of law and order, and the other by its deep wants and high powers. No idea is so sun-like as the idea of God. It is central, like a ruling orb. It is the light of the universe: and without it the whole horizon of man is covered with impenetrable and interminable darkness.—The past is a dream ,the present an unmeaning reality, and death is the horrible explosion, which, of humanity, leaves not a wreck behind. Quench the central light, and all is darkness forever. A world without a God, and a God without a world, are thoughts above all others most unnatural.

But there is a difference broad, between the idea of God, and God himself. The one is eternal and changeless; the other is ever modified by the mental condition of man. Indeed man's idea of all things—all his embodied ideas, whether in art, literature, or religion, will correspond to his mental condition. Ideas flow from mind, and therefore cannot rise above the level of the original.

In the earlier ages, Deity is worshipped very much as the God of power, of force. The sovereign of Olympus was the thunderer, the omnipotent in the worship of Pagan mind. The devotion of early times, proclaimed Jehovah a 'man of war,' and celebrated his victory over kings and mighty ones, and over nature's giant obstacles. Why this feature in ancient worship? Because such was the general condition of mind, that vast, creative, subduing force, was most revered both in man and in nature. Neither Samson nor Hercules *now* would be great men. Wisdom and

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goodness are not absent from the views which held dominion over the earliest worship, but these were less prominent. Worship proceeds from man, and must, therefore, bear somewhat of the image of what predominates in his own mind.

If this is the first epoch of human worship, there is a second, in which wisdom prevails, in which greatness of mind is the towering, reigning thought, in which He is 'wonderful in council,' rather than in war. Thus too, in the progress of man, Hercules gives place to Socrates, the hero of power, grows small before the hero of thought.—The sublimity of wisdom, of mind, is the great thought of this epoch. But there is a third, in which the idea of love, of goodness becomes supreme. In experience the world has not yet reached it. It has passed from the first into the second, but not actually from the second into the third. The idea of goodness is not supreme among us, nor within us, and hence it is not the chief thing that we see in nature and in God. But Christianity belongs to the third epoch, and is to produce it. The grand idea of this system, is goodness. In it, God is Father, is Love. His supreme delight is goodness. His universe is the revelation of love chiefly, from the lily which God has so arrayed as to dim the glory of Solomon, to the great sun, which is a burning type and emblem of his benevolence. With Jesus, the idea of goodness subordinates to itself all power and all wisdom. They are its instruments, its means. This is the most perfect idea, and Jesus represents it with a moral splendor, for which I can find no perfect illustration.—There are three epochs then which belong to the proper progress of man; and it belongs equally to worship, and consequently to the development of the great idea in worship that of God.

But he is changeless. The best have only begun to know Him. Jesus knew him in the more perfect way: and could but see and proclaim the ignorance of those, who were proud of the many oracles divine, by which they were

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enriched. He ever spoke of himself and his religion as belonging to a different school, as being a new age, a new world. Jesus therefore is the more perfect revelation of God. He lived his idea and made it brighter than sunbeams. He was beyond that age and is beyond this age. And his view of God, whose presence to him was as real as the zephyrs which cooled his brow, is the one which prevails in nature, could we but see nature as it is.

If nature is God's work, it necessarily bears the image of his mind: and is therefore when truly seen a revelation of Him. The Visible, shadows forth the Invisible, even the eternal power and Godhead. As is the mind, so will be its worship, its religion. Ideas too are creative; and christianity, known and lived, reproduces in man the divine image.

He is the present God. He acts constantly through all his works. He moves the universe at his will. He is not only the God of the original creation, but of the present action, movement, law and order of all he has made; and nature's laws, as we term them, are but His chosen modes of acting, of doing. He is foreign to nothing and nothing is foreign to Him. As the mind of my friend shines out upon me like daylight, through the eye, the countenance, the form, and the movement, so the Divine Mind shines out through all nature, through all this physiognomy of God. Such nature is. As the representative of God, nature is sacred. All her beauty is sacred for the same cause. It once was in the Creative mind, before expressed in nature, and is an attraction which should lead all to Him. Man has no rest without God. If the idea in its highest form is abandoned, image-worship will follow; if these and the true idea are forsaken, men will mistake nature for God, will worship the Vestment, instead of Him whose clothing it is. No man, no class are satisfied without the idea, or something to answer in its place.

Where is God? Let me *see* him, says the child. The child-sceptic says the same, and because no personal *form*

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appears, he denies, he doubts. He never pauses to think, should God appear in personal form, that it is the *form only* that he could *see*. Nothing higher is visible. God, he could not see. In his superficial reasoning, he pauses not to ask himself, What is the eye? What are its elements? Is it given to behold the material, which is as itself, or mind which is above its nature and elements? These questions are not asked; and though the eye never yet saw a human mind, there are those who will be governed by it, in regard to the greatest ideas. But if you wish to *see* there is more, far more than can be seen: here is on all sides a great, boundless nature, and though its mightiest powers and agencies are invisible, yet there is an unlimited domain of visibility, greater far than the power of all the vision ever aided by solar light. There is enough then to *see*, far more than there is any vision for; and the Seen is forever the living token and representative of the Unseen and the Eternal.

But while the realm of nature, like a boundless sea, spreads around you, and you perceive that the law which commands its wave is general, and fixed, let not this unchanging order obscure the Parental Character of the Deity. He is not only the general friend of all, but the real friend of each; he speaks to you and to me the word of love; in a thousand glad voices he speaks it. The tone of Jesus' ministry and life, though replete with true dignity, though full of moral majesty, brings the Deity down to our perception and feeling, more familiarly than nature reveals him. Man longed to hear a more direct and familiar voice, that should declare from the Infinite, a direct care and love which should speak to him with new power of the everlasting life. While desponding and forlorn, he lifts his head to hear this voice from the heaven-sent Teacher of Nazareth.

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PART II.

The Immortal Life.

I am to discuss the topic of the Immortal Life, the future being of Man. The idea, in some form, is almost universal, and like the forest oak, it strikes deep root into nature's soil. It is one of the great ideas of natural religion, and is intimately related to the idea of God. I consider this truth, as fundamental in religion, alike important to the intellectual and moral progress of human beings. I would, therefore, seek to place this idea on its true basis, and to develope the natural evidence in its support.

It has been said, that no one great vice or virtue in man ever stood alone. This is true. And it is no less true, that no one great truth or error, in man's mind, ever remained in solitude. A great truth, attracts to itself kindred truths, and thus the world in man, is illumined as with sun and stars. Hence it is, that he who establishes a great truth, although it may be apparently abstract, is the benefactor of his race. The one truth stands in connexion with a thousand other truths, and is capable of effects which no mind, however prophetic, may determine.

Man as an intellectual being is deeply concerned in this problem. Is his intellect to perish at the falling down of this frail temple, the body? If so, his interest in truth of all kinds, is exceedingly transient. He knows that truth itself, is everlasting: that it is the element of mind. But if he is to close his eyes forever to all the beauty and sublimity of what is true, then he is only anxious to know what shall best protect a mere animal existence until the brief hour of life is closed. But he, who stands upon the idea of the immortal life, is conscious of an everlasting nature, and feels that his interest in truth is as everlasting as truth itself.

The idea I seek to devolope, lies at the foundation of all morals. It involves the question, whether man is the mere

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animal, or whether he has the higher nature. If he is the mere animal, he has no concern with morals. These are beyond his orbit, and instinct only is his guide. The ferocity of the wolf becomes as great a sin, as any transgression of man. Thus it is, that the present subject, underlies all the great intellectual and moral interests of man. The truth concerning it, exalts our view of human nature. It makes bright and conspicuous the worth of its powers. It makes known the great reason, why man should be educated in all his powers, which is, because he is man. To him pertains an everlasting being, and each stage of his progress is to stand connected with that which follows. No idea is more important.

This subject more especially belongs to that mysterious essence, which we denominate mind. But no more of mystery has it, than any other essence. Matter in its grossest forms, is perfectly incomprehensible; and though philosophy may ask a thousand questions and discover a thousand facts, it can never declare the essence of the simplest thing. Coarse minded men, often speak as if the very idea of a spiritual nature was a fiction. But we are more sure, that we have minds, souls, or spirits, than we are that sun, moon and stars exist. For it is only through mind, that we know any thing, either in the world of matter, or of affection and thought. He who would undermine our confidence in the superiority of this nature, can only do so by an effort of mind. All knowledge, consciousness and experience, belong to it. It is the greatest reality of man. It is one essence. Of nothing are we so certain, since it is by its presence that all matters of certainty and of uncertainty must be determined.

By Immortality, I mean the future, and everlasting being of man, simply. I am aware that many connect with it the ideas of happiness and virtue. But the conditions on which the glory of the future life depends, are not those of simple entity. The two ideas, of being, and glory, are doubtless included in the New Testament phrase "Eter-

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nal Life." To be is not the great end. Existence with man, is a means to an end. Its great end is Virtue and Happiness. The existence of man depends upon the nature given him, sustained by the supporting power of God. The glory of man, is found in the perfection of his being, which he secures only as he obeys the Divine Will. By immortality, therefore, I only mean, the endless existence of man. He is to make that existence glorious by obeying the best light now given him.

The believers in immortality are not fully agreed as to the basis on which this idea rests. We think that there is a great truth on this subject, quite too much overlooked. It is not sufficiently seen, that the proper basis of this idea is the nature of man. Many base it wholly upon the resurrection. Unless they can see the present earthly body animated, they have no evidence of the future being of man. To them the body is supreme, and man has no being without it. Now upon this supposition, man is only an animal. As such he dies. The resurrection of his body alone kindles him into being. This view finds the basis of the immortal life, far more in the body than in the mind of man. It contemplates that no part of man belongs to the spiritual world—that all the intellect, virtue, love, faith, piety and happiness of all past ages, are extinguished—are out of being—are annihilated. Thus the holy of all times, are in nonentity, and nothing but *one act*, the body's resurrection, brings up all the past into life and being!—I shall oppose this view, not only from its extreme coarseness, but because it contains what I deem a fundamental error in the nature of man, equally unsanctioned by scripture truth and sound reason.

Had I time, I would go into the discussion of the sleep of man, until the resurrection, and show the suicidal character of this position, for the benefit of some into whose hands this may fall. It could easily be shown that the figure of sleep, only represents the *death* and *not the period of time*, between that event and any subsequent action. It

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could be made to appear, that sleep implies the *real existence* of that which does sleep, as truly as *action* or *waking* implies the *being of that which acts or wakes*—that the mouldering body cannot be the bed on which the spirit slumbers—that, if mind even *sleeps* independent of the body, it can *exist* independent of it, which is the overthrow of the basis of materialism; that sleep is only a present want growing out of the union between the mind and the body; that to contemplate a slumber for the mind for thousands of years after its sympathy with the body is dissolved, is exceedingly unphilosophical; that the inaction of mind it contemplates, is at war with that real utility which pertains to the operation of every law of nature, and to all the works of God; that it carries upon its brow the plain marks of a radical ignorance of the nature of man; and that the general voice of sacred scripture proclaims a Spiritual World, into which man passes at his death—all these points, some of which are self-evident, could be sustained by clear reason, and strong evidence.

But to return. The nature of man is the basis of his immortality. If God has created man for the future, his nature must bear the marks of that design. For in all this natural world, objects carry in themselves the evidence of their intended use. The *nature* of every object corresponds to its *design*, its *purpose*. For all things there is a plurality of purposes; but however great this plurality may be, the design and quality of the objects correspond. It is difficult to see a principle more universal in all the Creator's works. It is in the *nature* of objects, that He has founded the capacity to answer the purposes designed.—Thus in the nature of the sun and of the earth, has He founded the capacity by which they meet the great designs of their being. So of all things. The simplest wisdom apparent in all things must be forsaken, to obtain a different basis. Even the imperfect artist, who constructs an edifice, for the duration of a thousand years, is too wise, not to found the capacity of this duration in the temple he rears.

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But, though we speak of capacity as we do, we speak of nothing as independent of God. All nature depends upon Him. Nothing is for an hour without his presence. The rock has hardness, the water fluidity, the atmosphere elasticity, only at his will. But this will is so changeless, this constant supporting power, operates by such immutable laws, that we may safely speak of these qualities as *permanent* in their objects. In the same manner would I speak of man and the future life. Jesus, we think, had the same view. To him the spirit was great above all things. He saw in it an injured greatness; he saw there the germs of immortal life, and aimed to quicken them into a divine growth. The body in his view, was only the temple of the spirit. The former only could men destroy. Immediate Paradise he promised to the dying penitent. And never, in all his conflicts with Pharisees did Jesus come into collision with their leading sentiment, that 'our souls have an immortal vigor within them.'

I proceed to the examination of the chief objection to the immortal life, as it exists in a somewhat philosophic form, *That organization produces Mind.* On this idea rests the whole fabric, both of materialism and of scepticism, and it is therefore the grand issue, in the present controversy.—It is argued, if organization produces mind, that with the decomposition of the former, the latter must cease.

I do not admit the premises. But if I did, I could still object to the conclusion. For we often see great effects remaining long after the constructing causes have disappeared. The pyramids remain, but where is the power which built them? A system of philosophy and religion often live through many centuries, after the mind, whence they emanated, has disappeared, and ceased to be known.

But the position is false. It originated probably in the pride of philosophy, in its attempt to account for mind. It was thought that mind was accounted for when it was said that organization produced it; but when asked, What pro-

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duces organization? it was found that difficulties became too mighty for conquest.

What is organization? Is it not the *work* of mind?—Does it not as plainly imply a creating, organizing intelligence, which preceded it, as does the most exquisite workmanship in the arts? Organization necessarily implies an organic principle, as *antecedent* to itself. That principle is intelligent, it is mind. Organization, then, is not first.—Mind, Creative Mind, is *first* in all things, but for which organization could not be. To that mind, which is God, must all things be ascribed. Man is his creation in all the elements of his being.

But it may be asked, If the organization produces the mind, why are cause and effect so dissimilar? Shall sire and son be of wholly different natures and properties? The body, the organization, is mechanical. Organization of itself is purely mechanical, in *all* its properties. This, they say, is *cause*. But is mind mechanical? Is thought, is affection, is sympathy, is consciousness, mechanical?—No analysis of mind can ever detect one mechanical law or property in it. The mind is not therefore the effect of organization. One of the most remarkable works, that has recently appeared, resting upon materialism as its basis, is the "Vestiges of Creation," which makes all things the developement of law, and which only recognizes mind as the phenomena of matter. The brain, he says, is a galvanic battery, and mind is but the phenomena it presents. Materialism is ever rash and superficial; an illustration of which is the fact, that the author leaves this battery without a chemist to superintend it! Who ever heard of a battery without a chemist? Making the mind as he does the phenomena of the brain, he has a grand battery, and singular phenomena, all without a distinct controling intelligence! Should he have a chemist, the battery undoubtedly must create him! and when this wonderful machine shall fall apart, the chemist must also perish! Thus temples create their architects, worlds their Deity, and batte-

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ries their chemists!! The affirmative of this position, collect the facts which shew that the present *action* of mind, depends upon certain conditions of the organization; but all this class of evidence, affects the *manifestations* of mind only, but nothing in relation to mind itself. Of this, it can prove nothing.

The first evidence I would bring, is the common one—the consciousness of immortality in the human mind, its strong, deep love of endless being. No love is stronger, no want sinks more deeply into our present being. No misery is great enough to make a rational being willing to cease to be. Now when we look into the providence of God, and see how all the real wants of man are provided for, both mental, moral and physical, by a suitable class of satisfying objects, how can we imagine that one so great, so deep as the love of continued being, is wholly neglected? Is God parental in small things, and is he not so in great things? Why this universal love and longing after immortality? Whence came it? And what does it mean? The tree is unconscious, the animal only cares for the present, but the future is always the chief interest of man. And can we believe that the Supreme Power aimed at universal deception in thus creating us?

But it is said, that all men desire present wealth, which is no proof that it may be attained. I answer, that the love of existence and of wealth are by no means equal in power. But if they were, the argument is lost in the fact, that, in this fertile earth, are the materials of wealth, which might have enriched each individual of the race, had it been sought by the united vigor of all, under a perfect policy. The satisfying object has ever existed

It has long been thought, that universal convictions are founded in truth. The langnage of universal desire and hope is not a lie. But in opposition to this, it is said, that error has become universal also. For instance, the idea that the earth and not the sun is the centre around which sun and stars revolve. We admit the universality of this

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error. But how will you account for it? Only from the circumstance, that a truth lies at the bottom of it, but for which, the error itself had been impossible. This error of nations, has been upon a larger scale, the mistake of the child, who, rapidly conveyed upon the river, concludes that the shores are in motion, and that he is still. This is the error of the eye, not of the reason. But, had there been no *real motion*, the error had never been conceived. Nor can this error of visible appearance, be placed upon the same grounds as the universal conviction of immortality, since in this, no appearance of visible things, has created the thought. On the contrary, scepticism, has only one argument, which is the visible appearance of the grave, and of the lifeless form, upon which it founds its bold denials.

Superstition has been universal. But truths are implied in this fact. Had man no religious element in his nature, it never had been expressed; it never had blended with the darkness of the intellect so as to form superstition. And again, the real powers of nature are to all men mysterious, and incomprehensible. But for this truth, the evil complained of, could never have existed. But in regard to the idea of a future being, it is either a whole truth, or an entire error. If error, it involves no truth whatever. It has, we think, the strongest support, in the springing up of the 'hope eternal in the human breast;' an argument this, which all the sophistry in the universe will never remove from mankind.

There is a sense of the Infinite in all men. It belongs to the soul, and the thought is suggested by the vastness of the visible universe, by the illimitable array of worlds and systems of worlds, which extend from us to unimaginable limits. Nature is from the Infinite, and is beautifully adapted to suggest the idea and waken the sense of infinity. But the capacity of man to contain so high a sense, to receive so high a suggestion, is a phenomenon, brighter than the morning star, to herald his intended immortality.

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Nature around us, has facts and laws, worthy of being consulted on the present occasion. This source of evidence, is considered irrelevant by many; but when we remember that visible nature is the work of God; that its laws are expressions of an immortal mind; that, though matter and mind are different natures and have different laws, there is a system of analogy, which unites the visible creation with mind; that material things are ever illustrative of the mind's laws, action, and condition, we may wisely infer, that nature will either confirm or oppose the sentiment of immortal life.

1. *Substance in the material world is never lost.* No death, no change ever accomplishes such a purpose. Appearance is fallacious, and the immortality of matter brightens through all the decomposition and the fading of things. Here is a fact, the immortality of matter; a fact at war with the common appearance of dying, perishing forms. What ought such a fact to suggest? It should suggest the immortality of mind—an idea which like the other, has but one opponent, the common *appearance* of death. There is no loss in matter, says the philosopher. And we say, let this truth suggest another, still higher, and more important.

If indeed, there is an entire loss of mind at death, this loss must be the most tremendous of all mental facts.—We should expect therefore to find at least one illustration in material forms, by which to represent this truth, especially since it is seen, that there is not a known thought, or feeling—not a known condition, or law of mind, but that may find eloquent illustration in natural things. But this idea is so anti-natural, that it finds no shadow, no emblem among visible forms.

From what we now know of mind, its elements cannot dissolve like those which compose the tree and again appear in new combinations. Thought, sympathy, reason, love,—these can never become the elements of the plant, nor the flower. *There is but one alternative; either there is a perfect annihilation, or an existence of the whole mind, a*

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continuation of identity and consciousness. The more we learn of the human mind, the more distinct it appears from every class of material forms. It has the law of progress, without established limits. Were a single growth in nature to go on indefinitely, it would, as observed by another, absorb all other growths, and be the source of incalculable injury. But not so, the growth of any one mind; the more rich the progress, the better for all other minds. How different also is the intellect from the capacity of the instinctive tribes! The Eagle spread his pinions to the tempest with the same skill, thousands of years ago, as to day. The bee built her cell, and the spider wove her web, the same, of old, as now. No one idea is added. This law of progress proves man to be different from all other beings, and is the clear evidence, that a great destiny awaits him.

2. An argument may be drawn from the general economy of the universe. We have seen its strictness. Nature never allows a particle of her substance to be lost. Strict, but also generous; for a superlative wisdom, constantly arranges her substance, so as to answer the ends of benevolence. The miser cannot be so strict, the philanthropist cannot be so generous.

But economy respects *value.* It never allows *gold* to be wasted, whatever may become of the saw-dust. And were the question to be put, Which has most value, thy mind, thy spirit, or the dust upon which thou treadest?—I imagine that only one answer could come from the whole world. That which should determine, and answer, would be mind. This is supreme Judge in all things. Mind governs the Universe and mind governs man. What is it, we most value in ourselves? What in great men? In what originated the glory of antiquity? Whence the glory of Socrates? And what is it that we worship in God? All these questions lead us directly to the superlative and incomparable value of *mind*, such indeed as we ourselves possess, or such as are allied to us by kindred powers.—The noonday sun never shone so clear, as the idea of the

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transcendent value of mind. It is indeed, the worth and value of man. And now I say, let that sceptic think twice before he condemns his own God, before he charges nature with casting away all her gold, while she triumphantly retains in defiance of all change, her lowest, meanest substance! Let the wisdom, every where manifest, shield her from the scorn and reproach of this monstrous folly. I do hold that every word of this lesson of economy, which is taught by nature, is set aside, by the denials of scepticism.

But again. It is expected that the operation of a vast system of means, will promote some important, *permanent* good. The good should be great enough to justify the means, to correspond with them. What the entire plan of the universe may be, in regard to its greatest terrestrial being or any one thing, we cannot fully know; but it is clear, that man as a mind, is superior to all things, that his powers are of greater worth than oceans and continents, than suns and planets can possibly be. By nature he is greater than they. It seems that the formation and developement of human mind, is the ultimatum of all the powers and laws of the natural world. The grand design of the universe, so far as it concerns us, appears to be a school for our nature. Its universal connexion between cause and effect, lays the foundation of reason. But for this connexion, reason and science were impossibilities. The beauty, the grandeur of nature, develope the imagination. The benevolent utility, the sunshine of love, speak to the affection, while the deep, sacred voice of God with calm and holy eloquence fills the great hall of nature. No star of the firmament is clearer than the fact, that the great system of things has been laboring for ages to build up the mind of man. The work has gone forward under a general law of progress for ages untold, and perhaps unknown; and countless millions of minds have been reared, among which a Socrates, a Confucius, a Paul and a Newton, stand forth as prominences, as representatives of what existed in all.

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How vast the empire of mind which spreads through the past! Boundless and sublime! But on the assumption, that the great plan of nature is, that death shall extinguish all in man, I ask what *permanent* good has been accomplished by all this array of means? Do you say, that the present generation reap wisdom from the past? True, but if this and succeeding generations fall under the same direful plan, what shall *remain* to this or any generation? Is the present the whole for which all nature and all generations have existed? The very thought is foolishness. Now, whatever the plan may be, if the *loss* and *gain* are equal, it may operate through infinite duration, and *nothing* will remain. Does the universe go on under this plan? It is proven that in material things, there is no loss. But is the noblest nature of all subject to the universal and endless action of the plan supposed? If so, the richest means may be exhausted upon human nature, and nothing will be accomplished, nothing will remain in the form of a permanent good. The cistern is never filled, which has an equal quantity flowing in and out at the same time; nor does any plan consummate any thing, (unless it is consummate folly,) in which the gain and the loss are equal. Now in the name of reason, are we at liberty to ascribe this conduct to that wisdom, whatever it may be, that actually rules in the great system of things? In other words, gentlemen, is nature really and perfectly a fool? This is substantially the question to be answered.

But how quick and how gloriously the scene changes, under the light of this one truth, that man is an immortal nature; that his being shall be continued through endless time, that the law of progress shall ever be the law of his mind. All the order, greatness, sublimity and beauty of the universe then have an end, greater and grander than themselves. Then the discipline of life, however severe, has an aim glorious indeed, and this present life immediately assumes a deep solemnity and grandeur, of which nature's best symbols are but dim shadows.

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After this brief communion with the laws and facts of the outward creation, we might come again into the inner temple of humanity, and there contemplate the theme of immortal life. It is already noticed that the prophet-soul of man has every where spoken of a world to come. This prophecy is too universal, it is too spontaneous, from the soul's divinest consciousness, to be untrue. It is the voice of God, speaking through man. Tradition was not its origin; nor could tradition keep it alive. Tradition is dry and barren as the sandy desert. It is mere hearsay. But this idea has burned in the heart and life of the world. To the true man, no proof is needful. He does not ask proof, but is already above it, having the idea in his daily experience like a lamp that burneth, growing brighter and brighter with his onward walks.

There is an idea of perfection in all men, which is heaven-high above all their actualization. No man in perfection, ever comes up to his idea. Why this standard of excellence in each of our minds? towering like mountains, and floating like clouds of beauty above the plain of our realization? To aid improvement now, is doubtless one aim. But may not this too, be one bright indication of a future life? Such a life is needed. It is needed for the consummation of a perfection, of which we now have an idea, but not a full actualization. The soul gives many signs of its immortality. Sin, which perverts and darkens, is no argument against it; for it implies freedom of will, the possession of high powers; and self-condemnation which follows, is but the voice of that which is highest and best *in* man. The greatness of the nature is attested even by what is darkest in his career; otherwise just reproach could neither be given by others, nor felt by him.

I have said that there is but one argument against the truth of the immortal life. This is the argument of *appearance*. It is the eye-argument; and this only, which stands opposed. Death strips the body of its life and mind. The real man is no longer in that form to kindle its eye

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with intelligence, its countenance with joy and to command it into motion. As the eye rests upon the lifeless form the immediate illusion is, that the whole man is there under the conquest of death. Thus that visible appearance takes away for the moment faith in the Invisible; and the real man of thought, will, and action, who indeed was *never seen*, when among men is supposed to be no more. Man's eye never yet *saw* man. It is only his outward form, that the keenest *sight* ever beheld. "Let us *see* this real man that you speak of, after death," says the man of honest doubt, "and I will believe." But, sir, you never saw him before his death. Your eye is not omnipotent. Why unnecessarily absurd? The eye never yet penetrated the mightiest agencies by which nature around us is governed; it never saw God, nor the human mind, only as displayed in their works. But while this is and ever has been the popular argument against the immortal life, it never has been sufficiently strong to hold a successful warfare against the consciousness and the reason. The resurrection of JESUS, meets this argument fully; it achieves a real victory over the grave, and by this beautiful conquest, the argument most needed was given. The illusion of death passes away, and the voice of immortality is heard mightier than ever.

The idea for which I have contended, cannot be opposed by those who believe that man has a God; and that God is his Father. Those who worship him as the Universal Parent, must see this truth in the relation, subsisting between the Creator and man. God is immortal. And if he is Father, if we are his offspring, then we inherit kindred powers, then we are immortal. Otherwise God is not Parent, man is not offspring. If we believe that God created man in his own image, the same truth is manifest. And if we believe in *the capacity* of man to receive a revelation from God; if we believe in his capacity to obey his law, to love and to worship Him, we hold in that belief an unconquerable evidence in favor of the truth now under review.

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There is a Natural and there is a Spiritual world; but that which connects them is mysterious. That which connects the natural and the spiritual in human nature is equally beyond the sight of human intelligence; and it remains for the great teacher, Death, to remove this mystery, to tear away the obscuring veil of flesh, and open a new universe, a new world to our view. Whatever that world may be, the present precedes it and is designed as a qualification for it. And if we understand the idea of *qualification*, it necessarily implies *some resemblance* between each. That which *qualifies*, *must be*, in a measure, like that for which it qualifies. Truth and virtue, are the same there as here. Happiness there as here has its great foundations in what we are; and I scarcely need add to this, the self-evident truth, that if *we* exist in that world, that our *identity*, and *consciousness* of what we are and have been, must be with us, otherwise *we* should not exist. A class of beings without *our consciousness and identity*, certainly could not be ourselves.

Exceedingly practical is the idea of the immortal life. Few live according to it. It is daily denied in a thousand ways. The man of avarice denies it. Every scoff and sneer at man, however low his condition, wages war against this thought. The Pharisee, though he believed in the immortality of man, trampled his faith down into the dust by his pride and arrogance, by his feeling toward the publican and sinner. Every tyrant who would take from man his freedom, denies it. The sensualist who lives to his passions, and to the present, publishes a contrary creed. He who would live the idea of immortality, must walk by the truth, must deny himself, and give supreme dominion to the law of right. He should reverence man. He should love his neighbor as himself, and should recognise the idea of human brotherhood, in all his intercourse with men.—This faith in its full power, dissolves selfishness, opens the soul to a universal love, abolishes slavery, and brings freedom in its highest sense to man. It pours reverence into

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speech and manners, and wars with ignorance and vice.— It exalts man. His rights become sacred; and the idea of human worth which lies at the bottom of all that energy which defends the innocent, which battles for right, it brightens and magnifies. It discovers a glorious aim, for the life that now is, and sees a spiritual ministry in the constellations above, and the varied scenery beneath. It sheds light upon all things and fulfills the prophecy of the heart. He who combats it, combats himself. It looks upward and onward forever. And would we walk by its light into the perfect day, we have only to follow its mightiest, clearest revealer, JESUS CHRIST.

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